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ABSTRACT

The project group "Preparedness for Peace" at the Malmo School of Education in Sweden studies ways of helping children and young people to deal constructively with questions of peace and war. As part of this work, experts with special interest and competence in areas related to peace education are interviewed. This publication explores the views of Melinda Armstrong, Ann Hardt and Priscilla Prutzman, all three of whom are active participants in the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development's Working Group on Primary/Secondary Peace Education. (Author)

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PEACE EDUCATION, MULTICULTURAL ISSUES AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Three Perspectives from Members of COPRED's Working Group on Primary/Secondary Peace Education

Melinda Armstrong
Ann Hardt
Priscilla Prutzman
and
The Project "Preparedness for Peace"

The project group "Preparedness for Peace" at the Malmö School of Education in Sweden studies ways of helping children and young people to deal constructively with questions of peace and war. As part of this work, experts with special interest and competence in areas related to peace education are interviewed.

This publication explores the views of Melinda Armstrong, Ann Hardt and Priscilla Prutzman, all three of whom are active participants in COPRED's Working Group on Primary/Secondary Peace Education. (COPRED = Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development; an North American affiliate of the International Peace Research Association.) – Interviewer: Åke Bjerstedt.

PEACE EDUCATION: A CONVERSATION WITH MELINDA SALAZAR ARMSTRONG, LEE EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE

1.

ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in the field of "peace education"?

MA: Because of my ethnicity – my mother is a native Colombian and my father is a Russian Jew – I consider my childhood experiences and educational background to be common with, yet different from any minority person growing up in a white Protestant community. The problem for me was that I was told I was like everyone else, but I didn't have a group I belonged to. Like most "half-breeds", I grew quite confused. As educators, we describe that learnable moment when an experience "clicks". For me, the "click" came while attending a large state university nearby Kent State during the student protest years. I was seeking the answers to the questions I asked about why we Americans find it so difficult to tolerate ambiguities and reconcile apparent conflicts which exist between people and ideas. What happens to the value of the self in public schooling? What happens to the connection between our learning, our thinking, and our acting when we are not presented options or alternatives? What happens to our rights as human beings when we assume a white materialistic perspective? For me, the passion in teaching was to present students with more than one perspective of a world view. The challenge was how to create that kind of learning within the context of public schooling.

ÅB: Have you as a teacher been directly involved in some peace education?

MA: Yes, as an educator and counselor with children and adults for about 20 years I've promoted the values and attitudes associated with what we call educating for peace thinking and acting. My first years of teaching were in alternative schools. At that time, I followed my intuition and didn't have the terms and definitions that are currently in use to describe what I did. I was teaching multiculturalism with a global perspective. My particular focus was on the beliefs and practices of children from different world religions. Currently, as then, my definition of peace education is inclusive of values, describes a sense of purpose, and promotes an understanding of equal, just, and caring human rights. As I entered the public schools, university, and later, counseling fields, I sought the names to describe what I did to match the meaning of the audience I spoke to. Those names evolved to parallel my own inner development.

2.

ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?

MA: To me, the term assumes an understanding of world peace as the next inevitable stage in humanity's evolution. As a pedagogy, it includes every aspect of thinking, feeling, being, and doing that is necessary to become a world citizen. Not just in ways that helps us to work through the everyday conflicts that occur, but how do change our fundamental perceptions of who we are as human beings. As unique and diverse citizens of one common world, I believe we not only need to know about our brothers, sisters, and cousins; we need to know more about our humanity. What knowledge did we lose or did we never really know in the process of developing our specialized minds? What truly are our innate capacities, our future possibilities?

When I hear the words "peace education" I think of an education that leads us into the unknown. The unknown because humanity has yet to see the human being we are striving to cultivate and humanity has yet to see the collective systems we only now beginning to think about building. It sounds so basic, but to me peace education is teaching and learning about who we are, where we're going, and providing us with the skills necessary to get there. In the process, we rebuild society and culture.

ÅB: When you think of peace education in terms of what kind of goal you want to reach, you would include, besides certain knowledge areas, values, attitudes or behaviors, I guess?

MA: I don't separate those. It's all about the making of a human being. How I teach and what I teach are integrated in such a way that it is all one. Respect and care for ourselves and for the environment in which we live is content, values, attitudes, and behaviors. For example, learning through music and art the names and places where people live in the world is cognitive content: geography, language – phonics, spelling – science. The respect, honor, justice, and caring we give to the members of the human family is affective cognition. It is all one, what we do and who we are as members of one human race.

3.

ÅB: If you think back on your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at "peace education"?

MA: My diversity was not encouraged nor celebrated. To think white and to think male meant success. Good grades, positive strokes. To think dumb

and to think socially also meant success, only it was a different kind of success. It was the only way to succeed as a female that I knew. Now, whether there was an attempt at "peace education" and I simply missed it would be a function of my psychological numbness during those years.

4.

ÅB: Do you believe that schools in your country, as you know them today, contribute to a "peace education"?

MA: The decentralization of schools in our country is paradox. We don't have a set of guiding principles that define human virtues and an approach to the content curriculum supporting world citizenry. Yet, in some schools, educating for making peace happens quietly behind closed doors. In some schools, boards approve curriculum, but teachers may need training in making the necessary connections in their thinking. Do schools contribute to a "peace education" or are we talking about individual teachers making a contribution to the lives of individual children? Considering that our children have already arrived to us with their own particular set of stereotypes, prejudices, habits, and attitudes, much of what we teach is about unlearning what has been taught in families and through the media. Schools are systems, systems are comprised of individuals. Because every effort made is an attempt to change the thinking and feeling of an individual, the effort is worthy. Systems evolve in time as the individual collectively develops. The answer to the question depends upon the definitions given to the terms. Schools always have, for example, to integrate back into themselves attitudes and habits taught to 90 % of our boys through the cubscouts!

In the recent past, environmental education has become a valuable content area in the classroom. I have seen a considerable change in the past two years with teachers connecting Native American storytelling to environmental education. In the process, children are thinking about and feeling a kind of spirituality I believe not ever introduced to classrooms before. This pleases me, but is dependent upon specific teachers willing to take risks, and specific schools support this infusion. Another example, I believe, is in the area of special education. Each attempt to discontinue self-contained special education classrooms is a movement towards a "peace education". Institutionalized abuse occurs in classrooms in which the integrity and nobility of a human being is devalued. It is interesting to note that feminist scholars in listening to the stories of how women learn observe how many women describing their schooling experience use the

same language as do incest survivors. When violations are committed in the name of education and personal integrity lost, we are not teaching to transform the individual. We perpetuate dysfunction and foster harmful attitudes and habits in which one group has power over another. Eventually, the cycle of abuse repeats itself.

5.

ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first?

MA: The personal transformation of each individual teacher significantly alters the thinking of our public school systems. Transformation occurs when each individual teacher and administrator looks at the roots of her/his own oppression, her/his own attitudes of racism, sexism, nationalism, and materialism, and makes an ardent attempt to eliminate prejudice and heal from that form of abuse. The process is rigorous and our teachers must be willing to take a risk. Risk taking means putting the ideal before personal gain. I wonder, because our schools are predominantly female with male administrators, how are we enabling the status quo of the system when it is the women striving to design and implement a "peace education" curriculum. I have been told on numerous occasions by male administrators that the district has too many problems with special needs students or with test scores in reading that are too low to be worried about something so idealistic as peace education. In other words, "it's a nice thought to have peace in the world, but I have more important things to worry about like teaching kids to read". During the Gulf War, administrators were debating about whether or not the pledge to the flag ought to be required as an effort to support our troops to make peace. The boundaries around discussing the lives of peacemakers or what skills we need to know in order to make peace became blurred. Now, "that we have peace" one year later, we've been able to go back to these terms with less political overtones.

One example of what I do in my classroom is to integrate literature, particularly international folktales, with mapping skills. Then, the diverse temperaments of peoples become integrated with their historical stance on peace and war. Qualities contributing to peacemaking then become integrated with the writing of their own folktales. Through reading feminist folktales, I can integrate the equality of women and men, a prerequisite for achieving world peace.

6.

ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace education approaches among younger and older students in schools?

MA: Learning to change attitudes and habits regarding racism, nationalism, sexism, or materialism is for all ages. The how-to's are developmentally different. It's time we begin to expand our understanding of human development. I'm thinking about early childhood classes in the universities. When we teach from a developmental perspective and think about the egocentrism of the young child, our present curriculum makes sense. But we need the infusion of global thinking here. A young child is capable, has the capacity to know at her/his level of understanding, experiences beyond the immediate family and community helpers. Thinking bigger, to the earth and her differences, by aesthetically designing classrooms to have maps, artifacts, photographs, foods, etc. structures the external environment in such a way as to encourage the internal process to happen earlier. Do we wait too long? Middle school social studies, for example to change global thinking because we know the child is developmentally able to abstract reason and has moved out of egocentrism? Isn't that the stage of American thinking – that we are the center of the universe? When we begin earlier we have more time to challenge external influences, such as what the media tells us.

ÅB: Some discussion around peace education in the middle 80s dealt with how to approach nuclear threats. Do you see anything in that area that we have to think about in relation to the ages of the children?

MA: During the 80s, while I was home raising three boys I was thinking and writing about war toys in children's play. I remember during the Reagan-Mondale campaign when candidate Mondale used as a television advertizing tactic photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He stated to the effect that if you voted for Reagan, what happened then might happen again. My seven year old son would go to sleep at night shaking and crying, not typical to his personality. One night I sat with him and he discharged his fear over Reagan's mounting popularity. He was deeply afraid of the bomb destroying him. Educators for Social Responsibility had a tremendous effect upon the lives of teachers and children who sought out what they had to offer. They provided the framework from which cildren and adults could express fears, angers, and despairs. Because my belief includes world peace as inevitable, to focus on disarmament education is not a constructive use of my teaching time. To explore who we are, what our purpose is, how to interconnect, and how to build structures in which to

live is the focus of what I do.

7.

ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject with which you are particularly familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that subject?

MA: When I teach adults human development at the university, one of the ways in which I apply what I understand to be a radical feminist perspective to human development, I have students tell their life stories and learn the theories of adult development through their life stories. I believe I would do the same with secondary students. Why wait until we are adults to learn about who we are and where we have been? Why not begin with young students and teach the miracle of birth and bonding? That could be accomplished through a variety of content areas! The content is only the tool by which we learn about ourselves; ourselves is the subject.

8.

ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc.). Do you have any comments and preferences as to this terminology?

MA: I use Birgit Brock-Utne's term "educating for peace" and I like Elise Boulding's "peace learning". However, I imagine that once our thinking has transformed that we will go back to the basic word education. I would like to see the field of education consider what "peace education" could mean, not just the peace education field. What we are talking about is defining our human nature and how educational systems arrange the structures by which every aspect – physical, mental, and spiritual – of that nature can learn. Learning for a new age, an age in which economic, political, and spiritual peace is possible.

ÅB: Terms might also be important in communicating with parents and teachers what you are dealing with, and some terms might then be easier than others. How do you feel about that?

MA: Different words mean different things to different people. No matter what term we select to use in a given community, there are going to be those people who are going to find a problem with a particular term. I learned the hard way. I usually don't use the term peace education unless I am talking to someone in the field. And even then, we are bringing

different meanings! Actually, to parents and the community, I've stopped giving a name altogether to what I do. I just do what I do. They see the results in their children. Their children are learning and they are happy. That makes parents happy!

9.

ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?

MA: Before the Gulf War I would have answered this question very differently. Parents and community members became very confused with the meaning of peace and peace education. Levels of nationalism and patriotism rose to an all time high. Little American flags were passed out to children in some schools. In the name of peace was the message. Education about peace could have meant to some that we didn't support the war and that would have been anti-American. For the most part, parents and administrators do not want an anti-American teacher in their school. Because I tend to be not a political activist but rather a proactive transformationalist I avoid potentially political debates. I approach Western imperialism through teaching about care and connection to Mother Earth. I teach about racism and sexism directly by looking at our history. I have children interview their parents about their lives, their war and peace histories. During the Gulf War, I had my third grade children recording daily in their journals their personal responses to the war and what we had been learning about the skills needed to acquire to become peacemakers. Without saying, most of the children simply did not understand why the conflict couldn't be negotiated with words.

10.

ÅB: What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare future teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?

MA: As in any education, an inner and outer journey is needed. The inner journey is through personal transformation. I do that through telling and writing personal stories, autobiographical studies. Where have we been and how did we get there? Learning theories of adult development, how post conventional stages and peace thinking emerges, and how those theories apply or do not apply to individuals lives. Or rather, how does the indi-

vidual life reflect or render a story of human development? The outer journey is through acquiring skills and social transformation. What are the terms used in the field, how did they emerge through history and so forth? Taking another look at our approach to child development and expanding our thinking such that we create a paradigm shift early in the lives of children. Children can become global thinkers early in life. How they reflect that thinking in their actions is developmentally related. But the essense of the thinking can be taught/learned. And finally, what new actions will be taken? New thinking and new acting is the work of teacher training. Not new curriculum. We have all we need. How to use it is the work.

11.

ÅB: In many schools, the students represent a variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. To what extent would it be possible to use this fact as an aid in education for peace? Would you expect some difficulties in doing so?

MA: Telling one's personal life experience in story-telling may be a way to connect children to their ethnicity. History and relational issues emerge through the stories. For example, in one of my classes, a reentry level college adult was totally surprised to realized how much her attendence at many Martin Luther King, Jr. rallys as a child molded her later thinking and behavior as a adult. With that piece of information, she knew more about herself and what kinds of situations she could create for her own children. Many schools with considerable Asian population have a unique problem. Cambodians and Laosians are enemies. Teachers have an interesting challenge with their multi-culturalism. In effect, all attempts to educate each group about the other's customs through celebrating holidays or in just working together is eliminating prejudice. Yes, I'd expect difficulties. But its through realizing the difficulties that we make peace. The greatest challenge I believe is in the communities in which diversity is not visible. We have no problem here is the message. When asking about parents or grandparents national background the response is "right here". "We're from right here and here we stay!"

12.

ÅB: Sometimes the term "global survival" is used to refer to an area dealing both with the risks of nuclear war and with the risks of far-reaching environmental damage through pollution and overuse of resources. How do you look upon dealing with these two categories of risks

together in school? Do you have any suggestions as to how the teacher could approach the problem area of environmental damage?

MA: Within the past two years, the literature both for student and teacher has swelled. To me, the connection is a movement from our materialism to our spirituality. In whatever ways teachers are able to foster the development of that spirituality in a classroom is approaching the problem of environmental damage. It's our bonding – from our original matrix of bonding to mother to the earth. Once the bond is complete with the earth – what are the names, colors, categories, so forth and how do we honor and respect those names, colors, categories – the child in adolescence is able to move on to bond with the self. Between the ages 7-12 the bond with the earth is essential. How we've damaged that bond and how we reestablish it is curriculum for those grade levels.

13.

ÅB: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the school and peace education?

MA: I've not done this yet to the degree that I would like to in public schools, but one aspect not easily discussed is religion. As a human race, we are still so ignorant of the connections progressively through time between all the world's major religions. The historic and cultural connections are obvious when investigated and serve as wheat of curriculum resource throughout all the content areas. If we can accept the names for what all people call an unknown power greater than ourselves as One, then we can get on and learn more riches and treasures about one another. Imagine having a greater understanding of Islam during the Gulf War. While that understanding does not condone the atrocities, it provides historical context. Historical context then brings meaning towards the personal. Through knowing the personal, we can embrace our own human oneness. Discovering the skills to make peace becomes the simple and great challenge of this thing we struggle to define called "peace education".

PEACE EDUCATION: A CONVERSATION WITH ANN HARDT, TEMPE, ARIZONA

1.

ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in the field of "peace education"?

AH: I grew up in a family that was interested in peace. As an adult I was a teacher, but I got more and more involved in the peace movement, particularly at the time of Vietnam. I looked for ways of relating peace issues to education, since very little was done of that sort, as far as I could tell. I took a leave from my university to work in this field. I was in Colorado with the Bouldings. When I returned to my university, I organized a couple of conferences, one of them dealing with conflict resolution (I think I called it "The Meaning and Control of Conflict") and the second one was on alternatives to violence.

As an educator I define peace education usually from the standpoint of elementary and secondary schools although I am aware that main organizations such as COPRED look at peace education frequently in a much broader perspective as all ways of educating all people in this field.

2.

ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?

AH: I think about education for peace, at the elementary and secondary levels particularly, and I define peace in a broad perspective. I consider peace education to include non-violence and conflict resolution.

ÅB: Do you think of peace education not only as knowledge to give to the children and young people but also as something involving attitudes and values?

AH: Yes, and I also include what you did not mention: skills, which I think we often overlook in education. I got involved with "Children's Creative Response to Conflict" and I found that I liked that particular program. Then when I work with adults, because I work with teachers, for example, we use it for their own benefit. I've started using it with adults at any level at any place, calling it "The Creative Response to Conflict", just dropping the word "children". I like that particular program because it seems to me that it is teaching skills that we rarely focus on in our society. It is teaching skills on a level that can go very deeply into the person's psychological concerns.

The basic handbook is called "The Friendly Classroom for a Small Planet" which describes the activities for younger children, but I work with adjusted activities for adults. The program deals with skills in areas such as affirmation, communication, cooperation, problem solving, and bias awareness. In the area of cooperation, for instance, one of the favorite exercises is to have people in small groups and let them each participate in making a machine. They can pretend to be a washing machine or they can pretend to be any other kind of machine. What they do is that they pretend to be that machine, having a lot of fun working together. Then we analyze it and talk about it: The sense of community, the sense of team-building, the sense of trust that come out of it and how necessary such experiences are to peace.

3.

ÅB: If you think back on your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at "peace education"?

AH: No. I did come of a family that was interested in peace. But my school did not deal with peace education at all.

4.

ÅB: Do you believe that schools in your country, as you know them today, contribute to a "peace education"?

AH: A few, and they are the ones who have special programs such as the one I was just describing. Educators for Social Responsibility have been developing some peace education programs. There is also a national organization on mediation in education that has particular programs. Teachers' frustration with discipline problems have led them to try such programs without truly understanding the relationship to peace. Had they known there was a relationship, they might not have bought into it; but having bought into it, they see that it works. I think another area that can come close is the whole field of cooperative learning. It is approached in many different ways but basically it's a way of organizing a classroom, teaching skills of working together. The research on that has shown that the top children academically and the lowest children academically have grown through this program and that the middle group are not hurt by it. So it works.

ÅB: So you feel that it is easier to get teachers to use programs in terms of cooperation and mediation rather than when using the word peace education?

AH: That's right.

5.

ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first?

AH: It is possible, yes. The steps to be taken could be what I have just been describing, because I think these approaches are non-threatening to a community and to teachers who do not come from a peace education background. I think it is important also that these activities not only teach skills but also indirectly teach attitudes which make people more open to peace issues.

6.

ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace education approaches among younger and older students in school?

AH: I think that students at all levels could do some research of their own, but the character and scope would be different. The older students obviously can do research on important international issues. The younger children would do research at their own level, and this would probably deal more with the conflicts they see around them. It could include what they see about the Gulf crisis on the television, but usually it would deal more with interpersonal conflicts. Normally young children are interested in their relationships to classmates, friends, family. Even if they have travelled, they probably do not really comprehend world situations. Young Swedish school children can enjoy having information coming from American children, but they would not really understand the significance of international relations.

7.

ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject with which you are particularly familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that subject?

AH: I think peace perspectives could be included in any subject. I might give an example of something that I tried doing quite a few years ago – I was asked to develop a plan for studies for the Quaker schools on the West Bank. Because it is under military occupation, although they follow basically a curriculum that is Jordanian, they must have it approved by the

Israelis. I developed a section on economics, having the students take a look at economics in their home town, making a study of a chocolate factory or some other industry and really understanding not only what it was like but its implications in the world, how so much of what they were doing was related to the world. Where does the chocolate come from and other ingredients? How were they marketing it? Where was it going? How do you market it for different cultures etc? The aim was that the students would get some world view at the same time they could have looked at different ways of structuring a factory. Unfortunately, the Israelis did not allow this.

ÅB: How did you get this particular task?

AH: Well, I was a Quaker, and because I had taught curriculum at times related to what would be called multi-cultural education today, I was asked to do this; Quakers were asking for it. They had two schools about ten miles from Jerusalem and in these schools about half of their children were Christians and about half Moslem. This was twenty years ago, in 1972.

8.

ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc.). Do you have any comments and preferences as to this terminology?

AH: Personally I would prefer "peace education". I think disarmament education deals primarily with disarmament, and peace is broader. Global education can be an important aspect of our social studies approach, but it is just one part of peace education. However, whatever my personal preferences are, what term you will use depends also on what might cause opposition. For instance, peace education is not being used very much today, because it may create negative reactions. Many people that for instance in US therefore used global education did that only to find that the same people began opposing global education.

ÅB: What would be the most frequently used term right now?

AH: Probably global education.

ÅB: The term that you have been talking about earlier, creative conflict resolution, is that an alternative, or you see that as a more specific area?

AH: It is more specific, but I think it is a good way to get people to begin to develop attitudes based on the skills that they develop. So I see that as an excellent way of getting to peace education, among people who might not feel at home with the term peace education from the beginning.

9.

ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?

AH: Here in the US many church-related schools have been working with peace education, because the churches believe in working with peace. Public schools is a very different thing. Most of my answers so far have been based on the larger public school experience, and then you will often see resistance against peace education. One possibility might be to do more in trying to educate parents and other members of the community, so that they do not see peace education as a threat, because it can be used politically by various forces and the media. This may be a slow process, however. Work labelled "conflict resolution" is more acceptable, and may be used as a short cut.

10.

ÅB: What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare future teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?

AH: I think the teachers have to go through the same experience as the students in the school class. We have to start from the very basics, teaching some of these skills. When I teach a peace and conflict studies class in a college of education, I do exercises related to creative response to conflict every day, and I try to organize my class in a cooperative way. In addition, I try to bring in speakers from various disciplines at my university that have suitable lecturers available.

ÅB: Is this in basic teacher training or is it in in-service training?

AH: These are mostly graduate students who already are teachers who came back for summer school. They need the knowledge because no one had ever organized things that way. I try to help them by also letting them develop something that they can take back in their classrooms to work with.

ÅB: Do you think that many teachers get that kind of training in your country now or is it a rare thing?

AH: It is rare. And because of the economic cut backs, we find that schools are saying what we need first is hard knowledge, so that peace education is one of the first topics to go when cuts have to be made.

11.

ÅB: In many schools, the students represent a variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. To what extent would it be possible to use this fact as an aid in education for peace? Would you expect some difficulties in doing so?

AH: No, I don't think I would expect any difficulties in doing it. I believe that much of the United States at present is becoming more and more aware of the need for what they call multi-cultural education. Not every community looks at it the same way. In some parts of the country they are mostly interested in bilingual education – this may be any language other than English but in my part of the country predominantly Spanish. In other cases, the emphasis is on increasing understanding between different cultural groups. I don't see any major problem with that. I can see it very much related to understanding peace, because we begin to think of alternative ways of living, differences in customs etc.

12.

ÅB: Sometimes the term "global survival" is used to refer to an area dealing both with the risks of nuclear war and with the risks of far-reaching environmental damage through pollution and overuse of resources. How do you look upon dealing with these two categories of risks together in school? Do you have any suggestions as to how the teacher could approach the problem area of environmental damage?

AH: Environmental issues is a very crucial topic in Arizona because we have just had a large political debate over questions related to environment. I think many teachers in Arizona would be very much involved in this. How it should be handled in school depends on the level of the child. Young children may be doing such things as just collecting and sorting bottles, plastics, paper etc., where as others may get involved on a much deeper level. In Arizona we find concerns about nuclear power and nuclear weapons because we do have one of the largest nuclear power plants in the US only five miles from a large city. Because much of what is used in nuclear power plants can be used in bombs, we have developed a security-conscious society. Teachers could approach this problem area from many ways. They could get into questions of human rights. They could get into questions of nuclear war and nuclear power plans as they look at the environmental questions.

ÅB: Is environmental issues an area that is now generally dealt with in schools, more than peace issues?

AH: Oh yes. It is part of the science curriculum and it may be dealt with in the social science curriculum.

13.

ÅB: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the school and peace education?

AH: It is a sad fact that peace education is an area that is first lost from the curriculum when schools feel that they have to give priority to "basics". Because we live in such a militaristic society, the situation may seem rather dismal. If there are enough of us keeping the vision before us, however, we might find new opportunities to carry out peace education. The interest in conflict resolution is one hopeful sign.

PEACE EDUCATION: A CONVERSATION WITH PRISCILLA PRUTZMAN, CHILDREN'S CREATIVE RESPONSE TO CONFLICT, NYACK, NEW YORK

1.

ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in the field of "peace education"?

PP: I am the program coordinator of CCRC ("Children's Creative Response to Conflict") and also co-founder. I became interested in conflict resolution out of an interest in non-violence and the civil rights movement in the 60s. I went to Selma, Alabama and was a volunteer in the civil rights movement when I was in high school. I met Quakers there, and I became a non-violence trainer in a Quaker Project on Community Conflicts (QPCC) in New York City. Out of that experience grew the CCRC-program which really has grown quite a bit since then.

We haven't used the word peace education as much as conflict resolution, except in peace groups, because we have had the goal of getting into the public schools right from the beginning. We use the term conflict resolution rather than peace education. In fact, up until maybe eight or nine years ago, peace education in this country was considered not a very good term. However, recently I think peace education as a term is more acceptable and I certainly don't feel any problem to use the word peace education now, at all.

ÅB: You see what you are doing as part of peace education?

PP: Yes, definitely. I think peace educators consider our work to belong to their field too. Not only because of our Quaker roots, but because we have been in the peace movement, we grew out of it. Our original goal was really to get into the main stream educational system, and we have accomplished that.

ÅB: You see CCRC as growing out of Quaker roots?

PP: Yes. Our philosophy is very much rooted in the Quaker philosophy.

ÅB: But would you also say that since that these are the roots, persons who are not Quakers would not be able to use your materials?

PP: No. Quakers tend to be very open and reach out to a lot of different groups. We have had a tremendous amount of support from Catholic peace educators as well as from many different Protestant religions. We work with Ethical Humanists, we work with Jewish groups – with all kinds of groups.

2.

ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?

PP: I tend to think of peace education in terms of training conflict resolution and I imagine all the themes of CCRC – cooperation, communication, affirmation, conflict resolution, mediation and bias awareness – are very important for peace education. Our approach has been very much experiential, modelling this as much as possible in our own lives. Conflict resolution has been something that we have tried to integrate into everything that we do in the school and in our own personal lives.

ÅB: It's quite natural that you see what you are doing as part of peace education, but would there be parts of peace education that go outside of what you are doing?

PP: Yes. I think we are not as involved with human rights, for instance. Our program has been primarily on the elementary level, and it has been natural then to focus on: how can we create a peaceful classroom right here. Peace education in general is a broader area than we usually work with.

ÅB: What grade levels are you mostly dealing with?

PP: CCRC mostly deals with kindergarten to grade 8, but occasionally we do work on the secondary level. And we do a lot of workshops with teachers, parents and other adult groups.

3.

ÅB: If you think back on your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at "peace education"?

PP: My parents were fairly conservative, I grew up in a conservative area of rural Massachusetts. But my parents gave me a kind of education which was constantly saying: This is the moral way – they gave me a lot of religious education and a good quality education. However, the thing that got me into this whole area was when William Sloane Coffin came to speak at my high school about what was going on in Selma, Alabama. He inspired interest in going there to volunteer as a civil rights worker.

ÅB: You were talking about your parents and this person coming to your school, but within the ordinary school work, were there aspects of peace education?

PP: Not directly, but I went to a religious high school and I think that contributed.

4.

ÅB: Do you believe that schools in your country, as you know them today, contribute to a "peace education"?

PP: There are a lot of schools where they are teaching the teachers to do this. I keep thinking of one particular school in Brooklyn where they call themselves "The Peace Education School". They have mediators, they have constant multi-cultural things going on, they are always visiting UN and writing letters to people in other cultures and raise money to send to people in need etc. etc. There are many examples of schools like that, certainly around the New York Metropolian area and in Boston. All over this country you can find schools and teachers that are working very hard on this. It's a movement, that's quite large right now.

ÅB: Can I interpret what you say so that there are many schools now trying this out, but that this is not true for the average classroom?

PP: Well, it is difficult to know. You might find a lot of schools where they have done *a little*, but they might not call it peace education. Some have done a little on mediation, and almost every school right now in the U.S. is doing something on multi-cultural aspects, if you consider that part of peace education which I certainly do. So I would say that almost every school does something related to peace education. There are many teachers who have a sense of need and a sense of mission related to this area, and they do what they can, but they don't always have the tools or the opportunities.

5.

ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first?

PP: Yes, it is possible. To me, the first thing that needs to be done is teacher training. The teachers need to be trained and supported in doing this work, and that includes several hours of training, ideally 20-30 hours of training for all the teachers who want to do this. I do believe it should be voluntary. Then consultants like myself should go back into the schools and help teachers work out the problems that they might see with this. For example, it may be a problem to a teacher, when a school child says that my mother tells me that I should hit back. We help teachers deal with that kind of a comment and show them that we are looking at alternatives here. We don't judge the children or say that you are bad if you fight, but rather help them to look at what happens if you fight. We should continue supporting the programs, continue going back in and saying: How are you doing? We try to

make the people who are peacemakers or mediators in the school feel very proud. We have a lot of ceremonies, honoring the mediators or peacemakers. We give them things like globes or t-shirts and hats that make them feel great. I think that's something that outsiders can do – constantly go back there and to support the schools and the teachers. Because schools are always being told that all the problems of the society go back to them, and they are blamed for everything. Instead I think they need constant support in their task, the most important work in the world.

ÅB: Let us think of this question in another perspective – the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first. What can the teacher do in the classroom to contribute to peace education? Could you give some examples of what you are doing?

PP: We usually start out with cooperative games and activities such as cooperative drawing or cooperative creative dramatics. We also practise communication skills, paraphrazing, active listening to others – those are areas to start with. Then we work with self-esteem, starting out with easy affirmation activities such as: Say your name and something you like to do. Then we work towards higher risk activities such as "One thing I am really proud of in my life..." which is much harder to do; we need to build toward that. Then we get into a series of conflict resolution activities. This is a long process where you then work toward the more refined skills of mediation etc.

ÅB: You mentioned "creative dramatics". What do you refer to by that term?

PP: One activity we often start with in the teacher training is called "machine building". In small groups people would work together to create a machine using sounds and motions from the group members. We guess what it is.

6.

ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace eduction approaches among younger and older students in schools?

PP: One thing would be thinking about the developmental levels of the children. For instance, in kindergarten we might use, instead of role playing, pantomime or puppets, whereas the older children may play the roles themselves. Further, for the younger children it's harder to be just a part of an activity so we take that in consideration. For instance, in the cooperative machine building that we just talked about, K-2 children might choose a train as their machine for example and feel they are the whole train, whereas

older children could do a more complicated machine that involved really understanding how the different parts work together. Around the fourth grade is when people often begin to be able to see another person's point of view and that relates both to this cooperation theme and certainly to the conflict resolution. We tend to use role playing or dramatization with the older children who are able to get outside of themselves and see another point of view, while the younger children have difficulties with that.

7.

ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject with which you are particular familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that subject?

PP: For instance, within an English teacher position, all kinds of writing exercises could be utilized in any of the themes really: You could do a cooperative writing project, and you could encourage students to use paraphrazing – that's definitely related to language arts. To enhance self-esteem you may encourage people to speak or write about themselves in a positive way. In working with conflict resolution, you could encourage people to create plays that involve non-violent solutions to the conflicts. In the subject English it is so easy to find ways. This is true of art also, particularly in the area of self-esteem and cooperation; and in terms of conflict resolution students could be drawing comic books, showing non-violent solutions.

8.

ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc.). Do you have any comments and preferences as to this terminology?

PP: I always liked the term "awareness". We use the term "bias awareness". I think there is an underlying assumption for us that if we present an issue to a group, such as resolving a conflict, that when the group really examines both sides of it, they will inevitably choose the non-violent solution. I'd like to think that people will inevitably when they see what's going on, choose the least biased approach; it's based on a very optimistic view of the world. I like the term "global awareness" too: that we begin to see ourselves as part of a whole. But we are not forcing anybody to see things that way which sometimes some of the other terms that are used imply. We don't want to use a dominating technique. We want people to be choosing for themselves. We

want people to be empowered to make the decisions for themselves.

ÅB: How would you see the relations between the terms you now mentioned – awareness, bias awareness, global awareness – and what you have in your own title – creative conflict resolution – and the term peace education. Could you say something about how you feel these relate to each other?

PP: Well, our title is creative response to conflict although we also use creative conflict resolution. It has changed so much actually since we began. The term peace education used to be considered as a really radical, "communist" kind of thing. Now, however, peace education is a positive word, it's education for how we become peaceful, so I don't really have a problem using the term. We continue using conflict resolution because it involves teaching the *skills* of resolving conflicts which is more relevant to schools.

ÅB: Would you agree that what you have been saying means that peace education is the wider thing, within that creative response to conflict is a somewhat smaller area, and within that again awareness would be a smaller area.

PP: I think in general, yes. Although, I think that conflict resolution is a fairly general term too, and I think that in some ways you could almost use them interchangeably, if by conflict resolution you mean creating the stage where conflicts can be resolved. Earlier conflict resolution was seen as the skills and peace education was seen more as the movement, but there has been a real change.

ÅB: Sometimes there has been, in the discussion among peace educators, the feeling that conflict resolution might be so much skill-related that it doesn't include consideration of justice aspects and global affairs.

PP: I think one leads to the other. Once people get the skills then they begin seeing also global issues. It's a way into the doors of those people who otherwise might have been the people five years ago who were saying peace education, that's for sissies or that's for commies – or whatever word they might be using in that year. I think that one leads to the other. Attention to conflict resolution can lead to very radical action.

ÅB: But sometimes conflict resolution is used in terms of conflict management in a way that perhaps ignores the underlying problems. But that is not the way you use the term, I guess?

PP: No, not at all. One of the very important theoretical bases for the Quaker project way back when we were starting was Paulo Freire, and if we ever thought in terms of what's our philosophical base was way back then, we used to say it's Freire, and that has to do with individual and group

empowerment: We can make changes and improvements in our life. So it's not just skills, but it's a way of getting into the door from an educator's perspective.

ÅB: There is another thing I would like to ask you about. I have been in contact earlier with Linda Lantieri and her co-workers in New York, and they have a program which is similar in terms, dealing with creative conflict resolution. How similar are these approaches? Do you feel that this is the same thing as you have been talking about or is it different?

PP: One reason the programs are so similar is that they came to us to help them to start the program. One third of their manual is our manual. A difference, however, between the two programs is that they have become institutionalized: they are now part of the New York City Board of Education.

ÅB: Basically you see that these programs have a similar way of looking at things and handling things?

PP: Basically, yes. They used to be called The Model Peace Education Program and they changed their title to The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program. We still work together.

9.

ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?

PP: Yes, we have been dealing with that ever since the beginning, really. We always meet reactions like "I am telling you to hit back if you get hit". We had now had this visualized in the form of Yellow Ribbons. In this country the Yellow Ribbon grew out of a song called "Tie a yellow ribbon around the old, old tree", which meant: If some persons were away you tied a yellow ribbon around a tree to remind yourself of them. The yellow ribbon got started as a symbol of supporting the men and the women who were in the Iraq war, and it originally only meant supporting people and individuals, it didn't mean the war or not the war. But with this nationalism and patriotism that got going so fast, the yellow ribbon by the end of the war was a symbol of supporting the war. There was a movement to start a new ribbon which should mean that we support people but not the war, because the symbol got very distorted; and it was so clear that the government was contributing to this, was really behind it.

At the schools where we had the most advanced peace education program, yellow ribbons were put on its front door. That arose the controversy among the people who were in the peace education program there and they felt that it wasn't right to put the yellow ribbons on, so they kind of got into a kind of argument with themselves about it. It became an ongoing dialogue.

Going back to your question, I think opening the dialogue, opening the discussion is a way to handle such situations and looking at the consequences. I think there is nothing more apt to change people's minds than examining what happens when a conflict escalates. One of the reasons that this war was allowed to be escalated in the way that it did is that we did not see all the people who died over there. They kept that hidden. If you see what happens to a person in a fight, you look for other alternatives.

This is sort of digressing, but I think that our government has figured out the tactics of the peace movement and uses them themselves to disarm the peace movement. I just see over and over again that they change the language, such as when they talk about "peace keepers". In the news the other day the term "an outbreak of peace" was used. This is a title of a peacebook for children.

ÅB: Did you have greater difficulty with your program during this war period or after the war than earlier?

PP: Yes. I felt like I needed to constantly run around and say to people: things are going to be ok. There was a great deal of panic. I think people were in shock when this happened, people did not know what happened, and our role became almost counselling. Children's parents were going off – they might be killed. We had to deal with death and fear issues. We advised teachers how to respond, and basically the main idea was that we needed to listen to the feelings and be there. It was vitally important to discuss and not just say: well, we are not going to discuss it, as I gather a lot of classroom just didn't discuss it – they were afraid. It changed our work dramatically, it made us create materials like we'd never created materials. We had a fifty-page packet ready to distribute within a few days. Not that the materials were not around already, but they had to be adapted for this particular war because it was so unique. Media education was particularly vital during that period. It was confusing for me how some people could be so in favour of peace and the next day be supporting the war. That's something i really haven't totally come to grips with myself yet. That's part of that shock; we were in shock during that period.

10.

ÅB: What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare future teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?

PP: We need to give teachers the skills and support.

ÅB: And you think this is something that should be done both in basic teacher training and in in-service training?

PP: Yes, definitely. There is a great interest in this also.

ÅB: Is it done in basic teacher training to some extent?

PP: I do a lot of that. I teach two or three courses a year through teachers' centers, through colleges and universities, mostly graduate programs.

11.

ÅB: In many schools, the students represent a variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. To what extent would it be possible to use this fact as an aid in education for peace? Would you expect some difficulties in doing so?

PP: That's what I've been working on for the last year, almost totally. If at all possible I send other staff out to do the regular conflict resolution or peace education, and I've been focused on the bias awareness just to learn more about it, and I am writing some curriculum material on bias awareness right now. I've been trying out these activities on different ages of children and that's just remarkable to see how complicated it is and how much it's really needed and it's very integrated into peace education and conflict resolution.

ÅB: When you say it's complicated, what kind of difficulties do you see in that?

PP: Well, sometimes people are not aware of the complexity of relationships between male and female or many different cultures and all of the work that needs to be done to be able to create a safe enough atmosphere where people really can openly share about these difficulties. It is the same for class issues. In this country people tend to think that everybody is middle-class, and they don't want to deal with class. On the other hand, almost everybody is carrying around some pain about maybe being poor or not being as good as somebody else. Those issues are just full of pain. Age issues are important too: The whole area of children still being an oppressed group of people basically. This is one of the isms that children often relate to the best. They really see how they are oppressed, and when we start teaching them oppression theory they begin realizing that they understand exactly what we are talking about because they are constantly being ordered around

by adults and controled by adults and in some cases beaten or tortured by adults essentially. Maybe you don't have that as much in your country, but in this country children and old people are the poor people of the country – it's just horrendous to realize that.

ÅB: So you see this is an educational challenge?

PP: Yes, it is a challenge 1) to get to the point to be able to deal with it and 2) to face the really difficult awarenesses that come to the surface there.

ÅB: And so you are publishing some materials on this topic in the future that would be available?

PP: Yes, I am hoping they'll be available within a year. The bits and pieces are all here and it's just a matter of putting them together and to make sense.

12.

ÅB: Sometimes the term "global survival" is used to refer to an area dealing both with the risks of nuclear war and with the risks of far-reaching environmental damage through pollution and overuse of resources. How do you look upon dealing with these two categories of risks together in school? Do you have any suggestions as to how the teacher could approach the problem area of environmental damage?

PP: I think it is very meaningful to deal with these things together. At present, everybody seems so aware of environmental issues. At every possible opportunity we try to put a little stamp that we are using recycled paper, we urge the children to recycle all their bottles, and many schools have huge recycling projects built into the curriculum. Suburban places tend to be better about recycling than urban areas. New Yorkers tend not to be quite as aware of the effects of garbage on the environment as suburban or rural people are, so I think the schools really in suburban areas are more involved than the city schools. We try in every way that we can to relate to the survival of the planet.

ÅB: Are you in your own program working with environmental issues?

PP: That's part of the experiential approach. For instance, we ask the children to write their names on their cups, so we don't use more materials than we need to. We are trying to connect our actions with environmental issues. We are constantly saying: How is the conflict that's going on right now related to this conflict right here?

13.

ÅB: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the school and peace education?

PP: I used to be so formally committed to an educator's point of view of saying: "These are the alternatives, which one would you choose and how would it work?" and not so much pushing the idea of: you can't use a violent solution. But as I have been working in the areas of racism and sexism and homophobia in classes, I see the kind of pain that comes out. I find myself wanting to say that I will not tolerate a racist comment here, I find myself firmly taking a stand in this particular area. I don't know why exactly, but I find it somehow easier to say "racism is wrong" than "violence is wrong". That's something I am really struggling with.

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